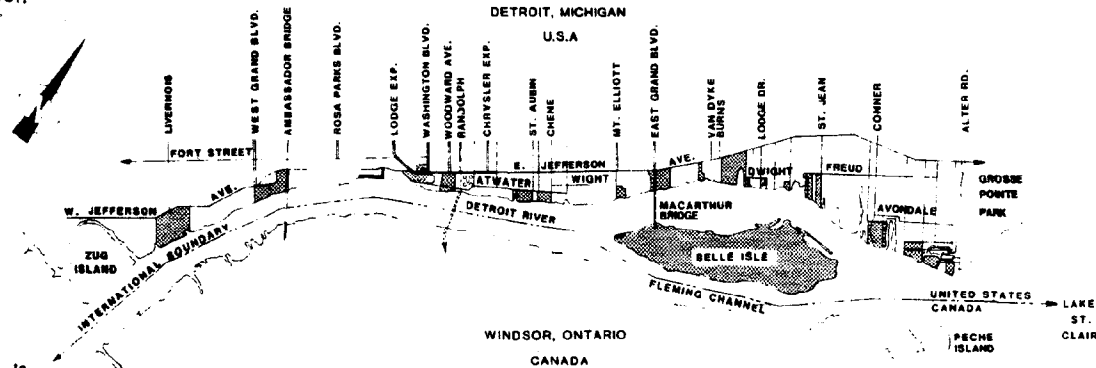


Detroit 7D-1.

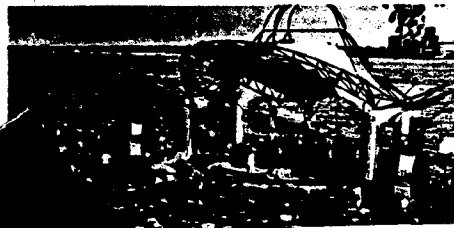
KNOW YOUR RIVERFRONT PARKS...

A HISTORICAL AND INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE

Coastal Zone
Information
Center



Linked Riverfront Parks



Merrill have been cited for by the Michigan Society Architecture, the Detroit the American Institute and the American Soci Designers. Chene Park undergoing a series enhance its capacity concerts and specific St. Aubin Park riverfront to visit much the same f has made it occ visitors. St. Au welcome Greg Detroit as it

Detroit's Beautiful Belle Isle Park



COASTAL ZONE
INFORMATION CENTER

HART PLAZA IN DOWNTOWN DETROIT

Management
State of M
Natural Re
Michigan
Michigan
Urban Wa
City of D
Projec

The Linker
signed to i
unities an
in addition
developme
Pedestrian
Historic
and E

Detroit's Riverfront Parks



DETROIT
RECREATION
DEPARTMENT

tes
he site of a com
nal for most of
twenty-five foot
pletely man
oundation layer
rmer Chrysler
was demolished
grace the Chene

Further info
Contact: Daniel H. Krichbaum
(313) 224-1123; Harriet Superstein
Riverfront Planner (313) 224-1144.



SB
483
.D49
K66
1985

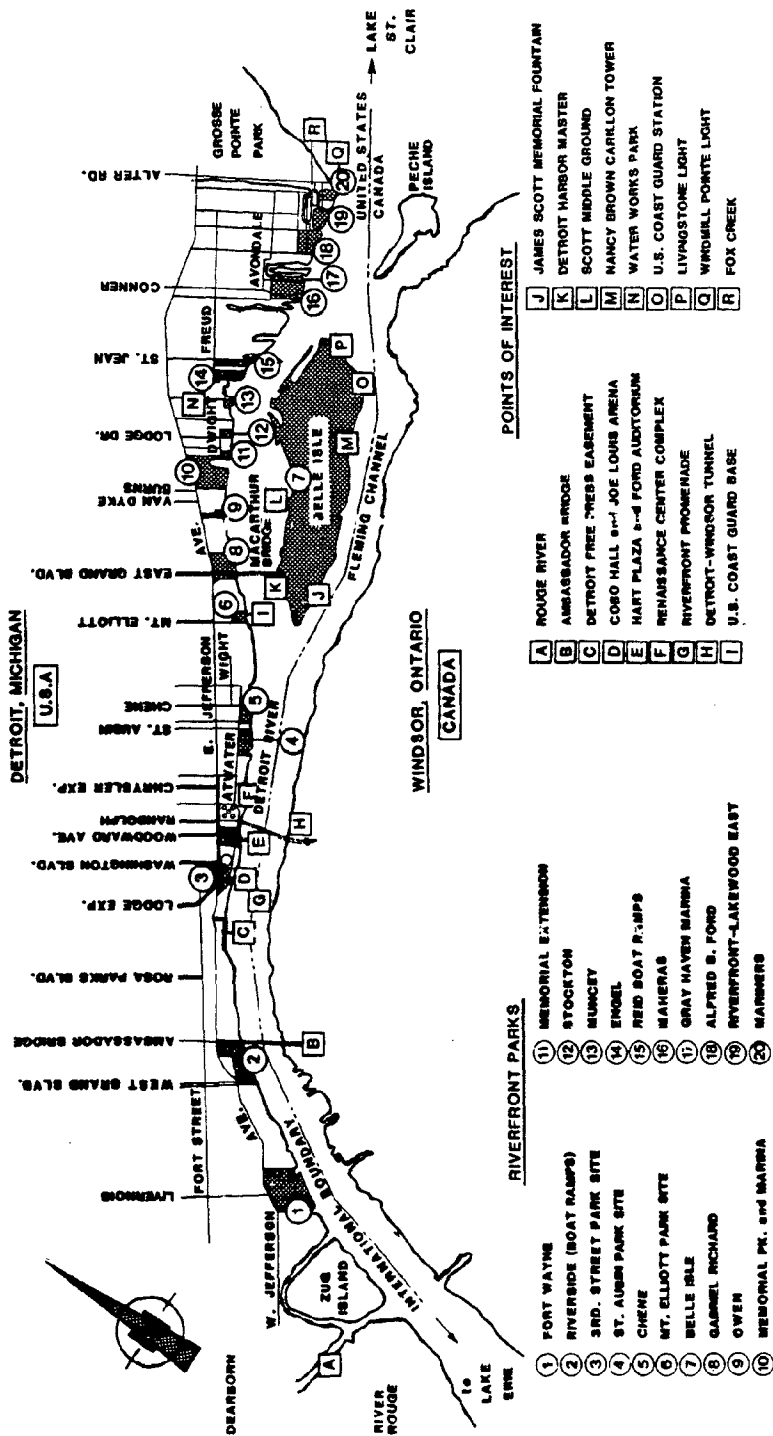
A PROJECT OF THE
DETROIT RECREATION DEPARTMENT and
MICHIGAN COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

DECEMBER 1985

SB483-D49 k66 1985

RIVERFRONT PARK SYSTEM

DETROIT RECREATION DEPARTMENT



INTRODUCTION

The Recreation Department is very proud of its expanding Riverfront Park System. Riverside Park Extension, The Free Press Easement, the bicycle routes and proposed pathways, Hart Plaza, Grayhaven Marina, Chene Park, St. Aubin, Mt. Elliott and Mariners Parksites are all new additions that have been added to the system since 1970. Moreover, these parks represent a new focus of attention in successful planning that enhances Detroit's most important natural resource, the Detroit River. Not only do the parks highlight the Riverfront, they greatly expand the range of experiences for our citizens by providing many new things to do and places to see that are the direct result of refreshingly recent undertakings. We invite the people to use and enjoy these fine new resources as well as the older more established public spaces on the Riverfront.

The East Riverfront between Downtown and Belle Isle is an area that is undergoing extensive economic growth and revitalization. The Linked Riverfront Parks project and 1984 addition of Chene Park as a major entertainment event venue are the primary reason for growth in this area. These projects have been the catalyst for other commercial, residential and office developments such as Harbor Place and Rivertown.

The purpose of this booklet is to present information about the entire system of Riverfront Parks. Some information is presented about how each of the Parks are used, what their important features are and how they relate to their neighborhood. Historical and related interesting information are also presented to provide a more complete context regarding their role in Detroit. Information on Park activities is also included to provide a reference on their different uses and activities.

The parks listed in this booklet start with Historic Fort Wayne and procede eastward along the Detroit River to Mariners Parksites at the city limits near the start of Lake St. Clair. Although each of the public places on this 10 mile route are listed separately, a brief summary of the Linked Riverfront Parks concept and bike paths are included as an introductory clarification prior to the discussion of St. Aubin, Chene Park and Mt. Elliott Parksites. It should be noted that parksites are places which are going to be developed as future parks.

Much of the material obtained in this booklet came from the property acquisition records maintained by Mrs. Geraldine Lamb of the Recreation Department. Other information was provided by the staff of the Burton Collection and the Municipal Reference Library of the Detroit Public Library, and from the staff of the Historical Department and Fort Wayne in particular. A final note of recognition goes to the information booklet "Detroit Riverfront, People and Places of Yesterday" by Kathryn Kozora.

FORT WAYNE:

ACREAGE 66.0

SHORELINE 2000

Year Built 1844 (Started)

Fort Wayne is located on the Detroit River at the foot of Livernois and is administered by the Historical Department. This Historical site marks the Western end of the city's public presence on the Riverfront.

Fort Wayne was named after General Anthony Wayne who was a Commanding Officer during the Revolutionary War. General Wayne is best known however, for defeating the British backed Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers near Toledo, Ohio. In 1796, he accepted the surrender of Detroit (and Michigan) from the British who had held on to this piece of the North West Territory after the War for American Independence.

Although several Forts had existed in Detroit since the early 1700's, the current site of Fort Wayne was not built until 1844. This site was chosen because of its commanding view of the Detroit River. The building of the Fort was in response to increased tension between the U.S. and Canada which periodically surfaced during the 1840's. It is nice to know that these problems have since been resolved and good relations between the two countries have existed since.

The Fort was first garrisoned by the 3rd, U.S. Cavalry in 1861 and was then relieved by the 19th U.S. Infantry. They remained until 1865. During the Civil War, Fort Wayne was used as an assembly point and a training facility.

During World War I, Fort Wayne became a motor supply and transit post; A role that greatly expanded and continued through World War II. During the 1920's, suspected Communists were interned at Fort Wayne during one of this country's "red scares". Italian P.O.W.'s were also interned at Fort Wayne during World War II.

During the Korean Conflict, Fort Wayne was used as an induction center; A role it continued until 1967. The last military use was a Military Police Post and a missile repair site starting in the late 1950's.

The actual Fort was deemed to the City of Detroit in 1950 as surplus federal property with a public purpose restriction. Addition adjoining parcels were obtained through surplus declaration between 1967 and 1976. Currently the Army Corp of Engineers has property adjacent to the Fort.

Between 1968 and 1971, part of Fort Wayne was used as public housing for large families whose space requirements exceeded traditional two bedroom offerings available in other projects. Many of these families had been displaced during the civil unrest in the summer of 1967.

In 1971 the Historical Department began the ongoing process of building renovation at Fort Wayne. The current restoration philosophy features interpretive history of the Fort and its military role in the region. In 1975, Fort Wayne was designated as Detroit's principle Bi-Centennial project. In 1977 Fort Wayne was officially opened to the Public as a designated historical site.

Some of the more recent renovation efforts include the restoration of the Commanding Officer's Quarters and the Spanish-American guard house structure. Fort Wayne has just received funding to develop the Tuskegee Airmen's Museum that details the struggle of Black Air Officers to achieve equal status during World War II. This project is slated for completion in 1987.

Also located at Fort Wayne is the Indian Interpretive Center. This feature includes 16 Galleries of Indian Artifacts and exhibits of Michigan Indian Culture and is considered one of the best in the country.

Fort Wayne provides numerous special events during the warmer months. This includes events such as Civil War Days, The Independence Day Concert, Blacksmith shows, artillery shows, its Birthday Concert and an annual Art Show. In 1986, it will hold the annual Highland Games sponsored by the St. Andrews Society. Summer flea markets are also scheduled at Fort Wayne for 1986.

Tours of Fort Wayne by costumed guides are available from May through Labor Day, from 9:30 A.M. through 5:00 P.M., Wednesday through Sunday. There is a \$1.00 charge for adults and 50¢ for children. During October, evening lantern tours are provided on a reservation basis. Additional tours and events information can be obtained by calling 297-9360 or 297-9364.

RIVERSIDE PARK

ACREAGE 19.9

SHORELINE 2070'

ACQUIRED 1929, 1979

Because of its location on the West Riverfront, Riverside Park is used most heavily during the warmer fishing months. It's features include a boat launch facility, over 2000 feet of shore fishing, baseball diamonds, playground equipment, a basketball court, picnic facilities and parking space. An additional athletic complex was recently developed on the section just North of the ramps. Riverside offers a unique look at the Ambassador Bridge, downtown Detroit and the Detroit Port Facility. It is also the site of the world's only floating Post Office: the J.W. Wescott II which provides mail service to passing Great Lakes freighters.

Riverside Park is the most popular fishing site in the Riverfront Park System. Not only does it attract those who traditionally fish at sunrise or sunset, it is used by second and third shift people who fish before or after work. During the summer, both access and parking are strained by the numbers of people who want to fish at the park.

The current site combined farms belonging to several important Detroiters including Alexis Campau, the Voights, Breverts, Godroy, and former Governor Porter. Former uses of the site include: the Headquarters of the Detroit Fire Boat, the Dog Pound, a sewer pumping station and a coal degasification facility. At various times plans were also advanced to use the site as a Power Plant and as a National Guard Armory.

The Recreation Department first acquired parks of Riverside Park in 1922 from a land transfer with the Public Lighting Department. In 1979 it acquired additional land from the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company. It was dedicated in 1984 at the opening of the boat launch facility and playfield. These facilities extended the park to its full 19.9 acres.

The Riverside Park development represents a unique characteristic of public open space amidst a neighborhood that is part residential and part heavy industry. As such, it is a reminder of Detroit's industrial past and its people oriented future.

FREE PRESS EASEMENT

ACREAGE

SHORELINE 2000

DEVELOPED 1987

The Free Press Easement will provide riverfront visitors with 2000 feet of shoreline for fishing, walking and biking. Under a special agreement, a promenade type walkway creates a public passage along the Detroit River between 8th and 12th streets. The development of this walkway is a unique offset of the traditional easement concept of allowing access for common or public purposes.

While fishing will be one major use of the easement, enough land has been set aside to continue the Riverfront Bicycle Path. This is a very logical extension for a route that has been proposed for biking enthusiasts along the riverfront from as far East as Belle Isle.

The area west of downtown currently has only one park (Riverside) that provides open general access to the river. The 2,000 feet of shoreline in the Free Press easement will provide a valuable contribution regarding additional riverfront space. It will also relieve some of the heavy fishing pressure that currently develops at Riverside Park.

The Free Press Easement is an excellent example of a unique cooperative effort between the government and private industry to provide land for public purposes while promoting the economic revitalization of Detroit. The Detroit Free Press will have a state of the art facility when construction of the new plant is completed in 1987. The city will benefit from the new plants contribution to redevelopment purposes in and around the downtown area. Both the city and the public will benefit from the estimated 200 new jobs that the facility will provide. The public will benefit most however, from the valuable addition of prime West riverfront access, courtesy of the Detroit Free Press.

HART PLAZA

ACREAGE 12.0

SHORELINE FEET 830

OPENED 1976

Hart Plaza, named after the late Senator Philip A. Hart, is the primary downtown event site. Its location between Cobo Hall and the Renaissance Center creates the central impression of Detroit's park system.

Situated between Jefferson Avenue and the Detroit River, the 12 acres in Hart Plaza provide a sloping panoramic view of the river and the Windsor Shoreline and walking access along more than 800 feet of shore. Some of the major features of Hart Plaza include an amphitheater and stage, a restaurant and winter ice skating. At the center of Hart Plaza is the famous Isamu Noguchi Fountain which has a very elaborate light and water spray display. The Dodge pylon, also designed by Noguchi, a twisting, high sculpture, is located near the Jefferson Avenue entrance. Hart Plaza also has restrooms, security and organization facilities and major infrastructural improvements which have been designed to conduct a variety of events.

Hart Plaza is the scene of a summer-long series of Ethnic Festivals that start during the first weekend in May and continue through mid September. Each weekend is devoted to different groups. Visitors can sample foods, dance, handicrafts and traditions from around the world. More than 30 nationalities are represented during the season. Ethnic festivals start at noon on Fridays and continue through 10 p.m. on Sundays. There is no charge for any of the festivals and further information about them can be obtained by calling 224-1184. The Detroit Ethnic Festivals have been very successful in drawing large numbers of people to downtown Detroit from the entire metropolitan area.

In addition to the Ethnic Festivals, other Hart Plaza events are also well attended. The awesome fireworks display at the Detroit-Windsor International Freedom Festival attracts over a million spectators each year; many of who watch the show from Hart Plaza. The Plaza is also a good place to view the Detroit Grand Prix. Other music events include the Montreaux-Detroit Jazz Festival on Labor Day Weekend, the Downtown Hoedown, Gospel, Big Band, Blues and Jazz Concerts. Boxing, boat races and various civil ceremonies have also been successfully staged at Hart Plaza.

It should be noted that Hart Plaza is an important part of the lunch hour experience for downtown office workers. Even when events are not on stage, it is a good place to eat, watch the boats and other people, and generally enjoy the outdoors along the river.

Philip A. Hart served as a Michigan Senator for 18 years starting in 1958. He left a legacy of integrity that earned him the respect and admiration of his Senate colleagues. Known as the conscience of the Senate, Hart was a champion of the rights of minorities and the poor as well as a dedicated protector of consumer and environmental interest. He was best known for his successful floor management of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the 1968 Civil Rights Bill through the U.S. Senate. Senator Hart died in 1976 at age 64.

HART PLAZA
Page 2

Several historic designation markers are located in Hart Plaza. One marker, (in French and English), marks the general location of Cadillac's landing in 1701. The other marker designates the spot where the Ford Motor Company was incorporated in 1904.

LINKED RIVERFRONT PARKS

The Linked Riverfront Parks system consists of three parks and the bicycle/pedestrian linkages that tie the parks to each other and to downtown Detroit and Belle Isle. The plan features almost 30-acres of parks at three locations: St. Aubin, Chene and Mt. Elliott Streets. The Linked Riverfront Parks was designed to increase public access to the riverfront and to catalyze commercial, retail, office and housing developments in this area. Originally proposed as the "Necklace of Parks" in the 1960's, it took until 1978 for the project to become viable. After several tries, the City received a major grant from the U.S. Department of Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition of the three park sites. Since that time, planning and development for new public and private uses of the riverfront has been a priority of the City, and strongly supported by the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources as well as other federal, state and local agencies. In the last few years, major new private developments such as Stroh's "River Place" and ANR/Mich Con "Harbortown" in and around the park sites, bringing major new investments and creating exciting new and rehabilitated facilities and activities along the East Riverfront.

Chene Park began operating as an entertainment venue with a successful Summer Arts Festival in 1983. Construction of St. Aubin Park and Marina will begin in 1986, while Mt. Elliott Park is scheduled for development in 1988. Development of the bicycle/pedestrian linkages began with a Signed Interpretive Route between Belle Isle and Hart Plaza in 1981. Eventually, this route will be developed into a separated bicycle pathway which links Belle Isle to Riverside Park by the Ambassador Bridge. This "Bridge-to-Bridge" pathway is now in very early stages of planning and development utilizing the street right-of-way for most of its six-mile length. During the summer, Recreation Department sponsors guided bicycle tours of the East Riverfront and downtown.

A special brochure on this project, "The Riverfront Comes Alive" and information on scheduled summer historic Bicycle Tours is available through the Recreation Department by calling 224-1184.

ST. AUBIN PARK SITE

ACREAGE 12.4

SHORELINE 1073

ACQUIRED 1981

St. Aubin parksite will be the second Linked Riverfront Park developed along the riverfront. The main feature of St. Aubin will be a 67 - well public transient marina designed to provide temporary docking space for boaters. This will enable boaters to visit the Civic Center, Ren Cen, Chene Park and Hart Plaza, or to eat and shop in Greektown, Bricktown or Rivertown. When it opens, St. Aubin Park Marina will be the only fully public transient marina space between Monroe and Mt. Clemens. St. Aubin's design will also feature a number of interpretive theme walks highlighting Detroit's relationship to the history, economy and ecology of the Great Lakes.

Groundbreaking at St. Aubin is anticipated in 1986 with the park opening in late 1987. When it is developed, St. Aubin will have 12-acres with approximately 6-acres for the marina and 6-acres for general activities.

St. Aubin's program emphasis will complement that of neighboring Chene Park. In addition, its boating facilities, the park's emphasis will be on picnicking, fishing, and instructional and interpretive programs for groups and individuals. There will be fishing and picnic shelters as well as park land developed into rolling hills for viewing the river and marina.

CHENE PARK

ACREAGE 9.1

SHORELINE 900'

ACQUIRED 1979
DEVELOPED 1983

Although Chene Park is only nine acres in size, its importance in revitalizing the Rivertown area is a modern urban success story. Designed to promote entertainment events, Chene Park is drawing large crowds into the East Riverfront area during its Summer Arts Festival. New restaurants and night clubs have opened up throughout this three mile stretch of valuable riverfront land.

The addition of more office and retail space, a growing professional services industry, and two major developments; (Harbortown and River Place) are the prime indicators of economic growth triggered by Chene Park. Once forgotten and maligned, the Rivertown area is being transferred into an unqualified success.

The site of Chene Park is steeped in local history. During the War of 1812, one of the last skirmishes of the battle of Bloody Run was fought at this site. In 1852, Hugh Moffat (a future Mayor of Detroit) started a saw mill at this site. Logs were floated downriver from the Michigan Thumb area and were milled into lumber at Moffat's Mill.

Detroit's Chene Park is the first of three proposed new parks along the East Riverfront designed to improve recreational access and stimulate economic development between downtown and Belle Isle. Chene Park's design as a "festival park" was based on needs and concerns expressed in many public documents and in many discussions with groups and organizations throughout the Detroit area.

Nestled between cement shipping silos, the park was designed by the firm of Schervish, Vogel, and Merz, and features a covered riverfront stage, a 25' amphitheater hill and a concession complex necessary to promote major entertainment events. It also features a riverfront promenade for walking and fishing. The park has won numerous design and program awards from Detroit and Michigan professional architecture and arts and recreation organizations.

The Summer Arts Festival includes jazz, blues, classical, pop, country and gospel music and features local and nationally known performers. On weekends special children's programs are available. Information on the Chene Park schedule and Summer activities is available on the Recreation Department leisure line (224-2REC) or through Special Activities Unit at 224-1184. Chene Park has expanded its fine arts program for performing and visual arts by placing sculptures in the park and offering at Summer Artists' Residency Program in 1986.

When activities are not programed on stage, the hill serves as an exciting feature for visitors who can sit and watch the everchanging shipping and boating activities along our exciting international waterway. Fishing access will always be available at the Eastern edge along the promenade. The pond which surrounds the East and Norhherly portion of the hill can be used for winter ice skating.

MT.ELLIOTT PARKSITE
Shore line 550'

ACREAGE 6

ACQUIRED 1984

Mt.Elliott Park Site will be the last of the three Linked Riverfront Parks to be developed. Mt.Elliott will be designed to relate to the redevelopment efforts by Stroh's "River Place" American Natural Resource/ Mich Con at "Harbortown" and the now vacant Uniroyal factory site.

"River Place" is a creative readaptive use of the Park Davis Complex. Phase 1 of "River Place" will provide 300,000 ft of office space, a commercial shopping area and open space plaza at the bottom of Jos Campau. Phase 2 will erect residential housing that feature loft housing as innovative concept was only recently permitted by revised city ordinance.

"Harbortown" is being built by ANR/ Mich Con and in its first phase, will provide additional shopping on East Jefferson Avenue, a 19 story apartment building and 48 townhouses, condos.

The Historic U.S. Coast Guard Lighthouse building on the West side of Mt. Elliott street across from the parksite, is also planned to become part of this recreational complex. The U.S. Coast Guard and the City of Detroit have recently agreed to a land trade which will permit the Coast Guard to improve and expand their regional base at this location and which will encourage the redevelopment of the Lighthouse Building into a community facility and make new space available for an entry plaza. While plans for Mt.Elliott parksite are still being formulated, the use of this land for public purpose will insure adequate river access for future generation of citizens.

BELLE ISLE

ACREAGE 982

SHORELINE 7.5 MILES

ACQUIRED 1879

Belle Isle is a Wooded Island Park located in the Detroit River between Canada and the United States. Linked by the General Douglas MacArthur Bridge to the Detroit Mainland, this resource attracts millions of people to its regional facilities and historic structures, annually.

Belle Isle gets more usage than any other City of Detroit Park and more than most regional or State Parks in the area. Recent annual attendance estimates indicate that in an average year, over ten million people visit Belle Isle. On a major summer holiday weekend, the Park will have well over 100,000 visitors. Over 10% of the visitors are from out of state with one-fifth of them from Canada.

Belle Isle has something for everyone with such features and facilities as an incomparable view of river traffic and the Detroit Skyline, cool breezes, fishing, swimming, canoeing, a freshwater Aquarium, the Whitcomb Conservatory with both indigenous and tropical flowers, a formal outdoor garden, walk-through Zoo, Dossin Great Lakes Museum, Carillon, Nature Center and trails, picnic area, baseball, football, golf course and driving range, handball courts, comfort stations, the Casino, Refectories, and the Children's Play-scape. Of added interest to out-of-town visitors is the fact that Canada, a foreign nation, is just across the water.

For the family, Belle Isle is a great place for a picnic, reunion or other outdoors events. There are more than enough things to do so that children don't want to leave! For the urban dweller, Belle Isle is large enough for solitude in wooded, outdoor seclusion. Recently, an American Bald Eagle, a bird known to avoid people, was sighted on the Island.

Lt. George McDougall purchased Belle Isle Park from the Chippewa and Ottawa Indians on June 5, 1768. He paid five barrels of rum, three rolls of tobacco, three pounds of vermilion, and a belt of wampum. An additional three barrels of rum and three pounds of paint was to be delivered when possession was taken. Belle Isle was under control of the McDougall Family until November 11, 1793, when William Macomb bought half of the Island. The following year he obtained the other half. Macomb bought the Island for about 1600 English Pounds (\$4,000 by today's monetary standards). Macomb died in 1796, and in 1817, his heirs sold the Island to Barnabas Campau for \$5,000.

The City of Detroit acquired Belle Isle on September 25, 1879, from the Campau Heirs for \$200,000. At that time 7 of the 25 Councilmen voted against acquiring the Island as they said the price was too high for an inaccessible Island that wouldn't see much use. It has turned into one of the world's most popular and best known Parks. As a resource to the people of Detroit it is priceless.

The Island, when purchased, contained 690 acres. At present, due to filling and reclaiming land through dredging throughout the years, it has 982 acres. It is 2.8 miles long and has 15 miles of roadway, of which 5.6 miles is shore road around the perimeter of the Island. The Island has had several names over the years, but was officially named Belle Isle Park by Ordinance of the City Council on August 23, 1881. In 1883, The Board of Park Commissioners engaged Frederick Law Olmstead, a Landscape Architect internationally known for his design of Central Park in New York City. Olmstead thought it best to avoid an extravagant plan and instead used large existing areas of natural woods as a way of channeling activities. The strong central spine of Central Avenue and the meandering canals and lake system that bring water throughout the Island are two of his famous features on Belle Isle.

The plan that Olmstead designed has worked far better than anyone could have expected. Throughout the years, the Recreation Department has tried to retain the Olmstead philosophy focusing on Belle Isle's unique location and facilities, blending nature and woods with activity sites and promenades. The fact that Belle Isle has served so many so well has resulted in the development of its own support system. Many fine individuals and organizations have donated a wide variety of facilities, equipment, and love and care to this Island. Currently, the Friends of Belle Isle and the Junior Leagues of Detroit and Birmingham are important park benefactors.

It should be noted that a recreation facility the size of Belle Isle has to have a continual upgrading of its facilities as well as sizeable maintenance efforts. Approximately \$15 million of local, state and federal funds have been utilized for capital improvements since 1970. These include a rehabilitated athletic complex, new tournament level handball/racquetball courts, a new beach house and beach development, new fishing piers and bulkheads, a major new picnic area and promenade, ten new tennis courts, a new walk-through Zoo and Children's Playscape. Renovation efforts include refurbishing of the nature trails, canal improvements, parking lot renovations, and partial fountain and historical statue restorations. Additional funds are still required.

We hope that the future of Belle Isle goes as well as its past. Some of the planned projects include the development of a Japanese Garden, an interpretive signage project, early improvements to historic structures such as the Scott Fountain, Brown Carillon, Livingston Lighthouse, and Remick Bandshell, new park fixtures, development of a Senior Citizen area and renovation of the comfort stations. Equally important is the improvement of the Park's infrastructure including drainage, utilities, roads, paths, and bridges. As funds become available, these programs will be implemented.

It is the intent of the Department that the aesthetic quality and the natural character of the Island be preserved while high quality recreational opportunities are made available for a wide variety of leisure time pursuits for all citizens in the metropolitan area.

Belle Isle exists as a natural, beautiful resource which deserves our efforts and concern. With the help and cooperation of all of us who use the Island to keep it clean, through contributions and involvement in projects which relate to some of its needs, we can enhance and preserve our finest natural facility.

A special brochure describing Belle Isle and other general information on Belle Isle activities is available by calling the Belle Isle Administration Office 267-7115. Hours and programs for the various Belle Isle facilities can also be obtained as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Auarium: | 267-7159 |
| Dossin Museums: | 267-6440 |
| Golf Course: | 267-7130 |
| Nature Center: | 267-7157 |
| Senior Citizen - Casino: | 267-7135 |
| Zoo: | 398-0900 |

GABRIEL RICHARD PARK

ACREAGE: 22.9

SHORELINE: 500'

ACQUIRED: 1927

Gabriel Richard Park is located at East Grand Boulevard and East Jefferson. It is both part of and adjacent to Belle Isle's MacArthur Bridge. The bulk of the land the park occupies was purchased in 1927 for 8.2 million dollars; other land parcels were acquired in 1886, 1901, 1921 and 1966. At the time of its development, it was known as Riverside Park. In 1936 it was renamed in honor of Father Gabriel Richard.

Fr. Richard was a Roman Catholic priest who distinguished himself in the early 1800's by establishing schools for women and Indians. His devotion to education contributed to the founding of Michigan State University. On two occasions he helped rebuild Detroit: after the fire of 1805 and after the British occupation of 1812. He died as he lived - helping others during the cholera epidemic in 1832.

Until 1927, the side east of the bridge was occupied by Electric park, a privately owned amusement park. Both the old Detroit and Michigan stove works were located on the bridge's west side. For years a giant replica of a stove marked the approach to Belle Isle. Currently an acre or so of the park is leased to the Navy, serving as the Broadhead Armory and Naval Reserve Center.

The Belle Isle Bridge and Gabriel Richard Park have traditionally been places to watch the Spirit of Detroit Hydroplane Races. These power speed boat races have been held since 1917 and annually attract over 600,000 spectators from all over the midwest. In 1986, Detroit will use the races to host the 29th anniversary of the Gold Cup. This will be the 5th time that the Detroit River course has been selected to sponsor the races.

Currently Gabriel Richard Park is undergoing refurbishment that will complement the massive renovation efforts to the McArthur Bridge. The entire approach system to the bridge is being rebuilt. The statue honoring Father Richard is being restored and the park will receive new landscaping after the construction has been completed. Arrangement have also been made with volunteer groups to create an accompanying floral display. All of these efforts will provide a beautiful setting for the park that is the gateway to Belle Isle.

OWEN PARK

ACREAGE: 8.2

SHORELINE: 415'

ACQUIRED: 1892

Originally part of the old Cook Farm, Owen Park was deeded to the City in 1892 by the heirs of John Owen and James Burns. At that time, its future use by the City was restricted to park space. For a brief period, it was also known as Jefferson Avenue Park. A smaller adjacent parcel was acquired from the Buhl Estate in 1948.

Recreational features at Owen Park include playground equipment and fishing.

The open space provided by Owen Park serves one of Detroit's most unique and diverse neighborhoods. It is adjacent to an aggregate of apartments and condominiums that stretch between Jefferson Avenue and the Detroit River. Some of those high rises are primarily for Senior Citizens, some are subsidized for moderate income families while most are at market rate with residents of above average income. The residents are a genuine mixture of different economic levels, including the elderly and the young. Owen Park also serves historic Indian Village, a unique collection of stately mansions as well as other neighboring residential areas by providing a pleasant setting for open space activities amidst its high density surroundings.

MEMORIAL PARK MARINA

Acreage 33.6

Shoreline

Acquired 1918

Memorial Park was acquired in 1918 with an original intent to build a memorial hall or center to honor World War I Veterans. A small sculpture was all that ever came of this idea.

At the time of acquisition, a small lagoon with dockage for 104 boats existed on the site. In 1928 the docks were destroyed by fire.

The City apparently changed its mind about the memorial and instead, appropriated money to rebuild the docks, enlarge the lagoon and operate a public marina at the site. In 1928, a lawsuit by an East riverfront land owner, Edward Gray, was filed, but Gray lost and the marina was built. At that time, Mr. Gray owned Grayhaven Island. It is highly ironic that the city now operates marinas not only at Memorial Park but also at Grayhaven as well.

At the time of construction, part of the site was to remain open to the public and part of it became the marina. The public section has a comfort station, picnic facilities and children play apparatus. This split still exists.

In 1952, a center dock was added to the U-shaped configuration and the marina's capacity was enlarged to 271 permanent boat wells, one transient well and a pump out station. The marina has four different sized wells so that 16', 24', 36' and 57 foot boats can all be docked there.

The operating season starts in May and continues through October. Additional information can be obtained during the season at the Marina at 267-7143. During the winter, information can be obtained from the Public Service Division of the Recreation Department at 224-1137.

The Marina is currently undergoing some renovation. During the past year lighting, utilities and dock boxes were improved and the center dock was raised. Future plans call for a new breakwall to better protect the harbor area.

In 1950 an additional 2.67 acres of riverfront land was obtained. This parcel is adjacent to the marina but is accessed through the Barry Subdivision. It is known as Memorial Park extension and is used primarily for fishing.

Boating is big business in Michigan with spending by Michigan registered boat owners at over 1 billion dollars in 1981. In addition, over 40 million dollars was spent in Michigan by out of state boat owners. Furthermore, estimates in 1985 have seen and increase of nearly 130,000 registered boats since 1977.

MEMORIAL PARK MARINA

Page 2

Pleasure boating is particularly prevalent in S.E. Michigan with an estimated marina dockage of over 14,000 boats and related canal dockage of several additional thousand in Wayne, Macomb and St. Clair Counties. Lake St. Clair is often described as one of the most heavily used waters for pleasure boating in the world. Attending the needs of boaters is a concurrent increase in the demand for marina space. Statewide estimates of the lack of current marina space indicates a need in 1985 for over 14,000 slips statewide. A sizeable portion of this need is projected for Wayne and Macomb Counties.

The East Riverfront is a logical place for Detroit to expand its marina operations. City operated marina's at both Memorial Park and Grayhaven are operating at capacity and have extensive waiting lists. Additional marina properties controlled by the city will no doubt be put back into operation as the demand for additional marina space will continue to stimulate further economic development for the East Riverfront Area.

STOCKTON PARK

ACREAGE: 2.75

SHORELINE: 300'

ACQUIRED: 1944

Stockton Park is a small site located on the Detroit River in an area known as the Berry Subdivision. Acquired in 1944, Stockton Park was named after David F. Stockton, a decorated U.S. Army Sergeant who was killed in the Saar crossing during World War II.

Stockton Park serves primarily as open space for the Berry Neighborhood, a historic district known for its many fine homes including the official city residence, the Manoogian Mansion. The fact that many of the 70 homes in this neighborhood were built on two or more standard size lots presents a spaciousness that complements the open area of Stockton Park.

Stockton Park currently has few recreational features yet it provides fishing access and a scenic view of Belle Isle, the Detroit Yacht Club Marina, and of marina activities in the Scott Middle Ground. Both the Detroit Yacht Club and the Detroit Boat Club offer small sailboat racing in the area across from Stockton Park.

Every summer, the river area around Stockton Park is caught up with the excitement of the Hydroplane races. Because of its location, Stockton is one of the prime locations to watch these speed crafts race the oval circuit in the River's South channel. During the Hydroplane races, Stockton is leased to the race sponsor, the "Spirit of Detroit", for paid spectator seating. Monies received from this source go back into the city's general fund.

BILL MUNCEY PARK

ACREAGE 7.5

SHORELINE 220

Muncey Park has play equipment and limited athletic facilities and serves as a fishing access site. The Recreation Department maintains this equipment as well as a public comfort station for people who fish. The land on which this park was built is owned by the Department of Water and Sewage but was developed for recreational purposes during the late 1970's.

Muncey Park is named for the late Bill Muncey, a veteran hydroplane racer who died in a boat crash in 1981. During the local races, Muncey Park is leased to the 'Spirit of Detroit' for paid spectator seating.

Located on the property is the Dodge Memorial Center which is used for city meetings and ceremonial events. Information regarding its use can be obtained from the Special Activities Unit of the Recreation Department at 224-1184.

ENGEL PARK

ACREAGE 31.1

SHORELINE 750'

ACQUIRED 1942

Engel Park was named for George Engel, an outstanding public servant who served Detroit as a Policemen, City Comptroller, Civil Service Commissioner and City Council member.

Originally the land belonged to the Delorme Farm and the Walter C. Mack Subdivision. Though the bulk of the land was acquired in 1942, it was not developed for recreational use until after 1956.

Before it was a park, the land that Engel Park occupies was the site of Croxon Projects. Due to the housing shortage following World War II, the Federal Government built temporary housing on undeveloped City land. The City administered the program as a form of subsidized public housing. The basic housing unit for the project was the Quonset Hut. Each unit was divided in half to form two separate dwellings. Rents were \$22.50/mo for a single bedroom unit and \$25.00/mo for two bedrooms. Temporary housing was also built as several other undeveloped City Riverfront holdings that later became Maheras and Reid Parks. By the mid 50's, the development of subdivision in Detroit's outlying areas as well as the development of suburbs concluded the need for this type of housing. The Croxon Projects were demolished in 1956.

Concurrent with the demolition of the Croxon projects was the construction of the first recreation facility at Engel Park, a public boat launch ramp. Later baseball diamonds, parking lots and comfort station was added.

Engel Park is an important element in the City's riverfront revitalization efforts. In April 1984, the City of Detroit acquired the abandoned "Harbor, Inc." marina and incorporated the 6-acre parcel into Engel Park. It created a new water edge with a high-bluff overlooking the extensive commercial boat basin below. Funds for this purchase came from the Michigan Land Trust Fund which recognized the importance of this waterfront parcel in the City's total riverfront redevelopment efforts. In fall of 1984 the City agreed to sell a portion of Engel Park fronting Freud Street to a private corporation for a manufacturing facility.

Both of these actions are part of the total reallocation of land concept known as the "Marina City" project, in which land at the river's edge is planned for expanded park, boating, and marine related uses, while land further away from the water abutting present industrial uses is being redesignated for job-producing industrial or commerce. It is hoped that the Riverfront portion of Engel Park, with its fishing shoreline, picnic and play areas will remain a part of the City's Riverfront Park system while new businesses, industries and homes utilize the land overlooking the improved park developments.

VAUGHAN REID MEMORIAL PARK AND BOAT LAUNCH

ACREAGE 18.7

SHORELINE 300'

ACQUIRED 1942

Reid Ramps are one of two City operated boat launch facilities on the Detroit River. Named after a former Parks and Recreation Commissioner Vaughan Reid, the facility was dedicated in 1964. Reid Ramps is located on the old St. Jean Farm. Access is from St. Jean Street as it intersects the river.

The major portion of this facility was first acquired in 1942. Immediately after World War II, part of the park was used to house returning veterans. During the mid 1950's, these temporary homes were removed. The section along the river was once a base for a commercial seaplane enterprise.

The current facility allows boats (primarily runabouts) to embark and disembark on a temporary and occasional use basis. A large docking slip for which a hoist could be used to lift out larger boats is also part of the facility. Reid Ramps also has a control building, restroom and office facilities and a 160 acre parking area for boat trailers and cars or trucks. During the Freedom Festival Fireworks display, the Reid Ramps lot is a major viewing site.

The normal attended season is from March to November. During the winter, further information can be obtained from the Public Service Division of the Recreation Department at 224-1139. During warmer months, the number for the control building is 267-7151.

MAHERAS PLAYFIELD

Acreage: 52.7

Shoreline: 1100'

Acquired: 1929
(In Part)

Maheras Playfield and Recreation Center was named after Peter Maheras, a World War II soldier who was posthumously awarded for U.S. Army Silver Star. Originally called Algonquin Field, major sections were acquired in 1928, 1943, 1954 and 1957.

At the conclusion of World War II, temporarily housing for returning veterans was built on the site and remained there until the early 1950's. From 1953 to 1969, Maheras (as well as Belle Isle) was used as a NIKE Missile site. Today, Maheras has no remaining military vestiges.

Major park redevelopment at Maheras occurred in 1963 (lighted baseball diamonds), 1966 (Recreation Center), 1969 (swimming pool), and 1977 (baseball courts).

Maheras abutts the marina property at Grayhaven. Access to the marina is along a pleasant winding drive that crosses the playfield.

Maheras Playfield serves the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood. Its activities include heavily used baseball, basketball and swimming facilities. Its 52 acres provide space for outdoor activities, picnics and games as well as a place to go to get away from it all. At the southwestern corner of the park is an elevated berm that provides a pleasant outlook over the Detroit River. The 1100 feet of shore serves as an important fishing access site in the Riverfront Park System.

The community recreation center and adjoining school have become public forums where community leaders meet to improve the quality of life in their neighborhood.

GRAYHAVEN MARINA

ACREAGE 13.2

SHORELINE 2100' (CIRC)

ACQUIRED 1977

Grayhaven Marina is one of two marinas operated by the City. It currently holds 78 boats up to 30' in size. The marina is named Grayhaven because it faces Grayhaven Island, a sliver of land surrounded by artificial lagoons and the Detroit River. The island was named for its developer, local real estate tycoon, Edward Gray.

Grayhaven is a legendary name in the history of power boat racing. It was the Island home of boat racing great, Gar Wood. Wood won the Gold Cup Race in 1917 using "Miss Detroiter", a boat that he personally designed. During his racing career, Gar Wood won the Gold Cup five times and won the English Harmsworth Cup eight times. In 1932, Wood piloted "Miss America X" to a water speed record of more than 124 m.p.h.

Wood was more than just a racer. He was also a noted inventor and designer of marine craft and accessories. One of his most famous designs became the prototype of the PT Boat, a craft distinguished in the Naval history of World War II and Korea. He also helped finance the Chris-Craft Boat Manufacturers Company.

Gar Wood lived on Grayhaven Island in a 40 room mansion. In 1968, the Gar Wood Mansion was sold and the structure suffered misuse and vandalism. It was demolished in the late 1970's.

Wood died in Florida in 1971 at the age of 90. A model of one of his race boats, "Miss America X" is on display at the Dossin Museum on Belle Isle.

Grayhaven Marina was created by widening the Port (West) Lagoon off Grayhaven Island. The land (170,000 cubic yards) was removed from the Maheras side creating a protected bay from the River's action. Although the marina currently holds only 78 boats, plans have been developed to enlarge its capacity to 296 berths. Given the shortage of public marina space, the enlargement will make a contribution towards the needs of small pleasure boat owners.

The site was acquired by a grant from the Michigan Waterways Commission. Although the State owns Grayhaven Marina, the Public Service Division of the Recreation Department operates the marina. The City provides amenities including ice, sewage pump out, water, picnic facilities and security. Further information regarding rates and services can be obtained from the Public Service Division at 224-1139.

HANDICAPPED CENTER AND FORD PARK

ACREAGE 33.9

SHORELINE 1800

BUILT 1969

The Handicapped Center was built in 1969 and was the first municipal operated center in the country. At the time of its dedication, the center had incorporated into its design, state of the art planning barrier free access and use. Donations of \$50,000 from the Metropolitan Kawanis Club helped pay for some of the cost of the 5,000 square foot center. Special equipment for a children's play area was donated by the Jr. Chamber of Commerce. The Detroit Neurosurgical Foundation donated a 10 station exercise course designed for wheel chair participants. The City of Detroit provided the land and appropriated additional funds for building fixtures, landscaping and parking.

The Handicapped Center is a special place for special people. Operated by a small but dedicated staff, participants accept the center and other visitors as their own place and friends. The center is purposely secluded, away from the rest of the world so that special population members are among equals. The Handicapped Center fills part of a great need in a city the size of Detroit. Activities at the Handicapped Center usually start with lunch and then proceed to a wide variety of afternoon entertainment. Much of the entertaining is done by participants who happen to be there that day.

During November and December, the center provides traditional Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for 4,000 people. In the summer, the Handicapped Center, working in conjunction with the Wayne County East Seals Campaign, puts on a seven week day camp for the handicapped. The Lions Club Picnic for nursing home residents is another major event. There is also a series of concerts that are provided throughout the year.

The land that the center is built on is known as Alfred Brush Ford Park. The Eastern portion of Ford Park is more public oriented and access is from Lakewood. A.B. Ford was acquired in 1948 through the process of condemnation. The park is named after Alfred B. Ford, a fighter pilot who was killed during World War II.

With its long shoreline, A.B. Ford Park is a major fishing site. It also has as one of its boundaries a canal that is used to access inland dockage for boats. Ford Park also has a comfort station, picnic and playground fixtures.

RIVERFRONT-LAKEWOOD EAST - LIGHTHOUSE CENTER

ACREAGE 28.1

SHORELINE 1100

ACQUIRED 1948 - 1962

The Riverfront-Lakewood East Complex represents a sizeable accumulation of public facilities and park space that exist on the Far East Riverfront. Access to the park and center is from Alter Road. The park includes 28.1 acres of land and a recreation facility known as the Lighthouse Center.

The Lighthouse Center was acquired from the Windmill Point Yacht Club in 1962 and is primarily used for meetings and for a part-time Senior Citizen's Program. The building is available for special meetings for groups from all over the Detroit metropolitan area and often serves as a reacquaintance with the East Riverfront area where many of these visitors grew up. The Senior's Program includes special picnics, square dancing and other social activities.

Riverfront-Lakewood East Park, with its 1100 feet of shoreline is a very good fishing site. Extensive efforts have been taken to protect the shoreline from erosion and flooding. Located at the start of the Detroit River, the park provides good viewing of the shipping and Lake St. Clair. Riverfront-Lakewood East Park has a nice stand of mature trees and provides a pleasant setting for picnics and park outings. The site also has playground equipment and a comfort station.

MARINERS PARK SITE

ACREAGE: 6.98

SHORELINE: 407'

ACQUIRED: 1982

Mariners Park was acquired from the Federal Government in 1982 as part of the "Legacy of Parks" program. Under this program, unused federally owned land can be transferred to a local municipality at no cost, provided that it is dedicated to perpetual use as a public recreation site.

When Mariners Park is fully developed it will serve as the Eastern end of the Recreational Riverfront System. Located near Lakewood East, A.B. Ford and the Lighthouse Center, this park offers excellent riverfront access within the Jefferson-Chalmers community. The site is being developed primarily for walking, fishing and picnics.

Mariners Park affords an excellent view of Lake St. Clair as it runs into the mouth of the Detroit River. In addition, Great Lakes shipping lanes are directly in front of the shoreline. Park patrons will have the unique opportunity to see at close range a wide variety of commercial and pleasure crafts from many parts of the world.

The land at Mariners Park juts out into the Detroit River to form a navigational landmark known as Windmill Point. This was once the site of an old French windmill. During the War of 1812, its owner rolled the mill stones into the lake to prevent British troops from using the mill.

Windmill Point Lighthouse is a major reference point for ships entering and leaving the Detroit River. The Coast Guard also uses this facility to chart water levels, monitor ice flow and measure the speed of river current.

In addition to providing a spectacular view of the sun setting and rising, Mariners Park is only 1,000 yards away from Peach Isle. This Canadian owned boat park and bird sanctuary promises both the casual and serious bird watcher and excellent opportunity to see a wide variety of our region's fine feathered friends.

NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CENTER LIBRARY



3 6668 14109 6562